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Message Text

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42
ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CPR-02 A-01 L-03 SS-20 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7002
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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: AORG, UN, OGEN
SUBJECT: COMPLAINTS BY UN DIPLOMATS ON GASOLINE SHORTAGE

REF: STATE 05234

1. ALTHOUGH GASOLINE SHORTAGE HAS PREVAILED THROUGHOUT ENGLAND SINCE EARLY NOVEMBER, THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE HAS TAKEN NO STEPS TO PROVIDE SPECIAL GASOLINE DELIVERY SERVICES FOR THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR COMMUNITY.

2. BY EARLY DECEMBER THE GASOLINE SITUATION WAS ONE OF PANIC BUYING. BOTH OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE CARS WERE OBLIGED TO WAIT IN LONG LINES TO PURCHASE TWO TO FOUR GALLONS GASOLINE. WAITING TIMES OF THIRTY MINUTES WERE COMMON, AND UP TO ONE HOUR NOT UNUSUAL. VAST MAJORITY OF STATIONS CLOSED BEFORE SIX P.M., BY ONE P.M. SATURDAY, AND ALL CLOSED ON SUNDAY.

3. AFTER THE HOLIDAY SEASON, COINCIDENTAL WITH THE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT OIL DELIVERIES FROM ARAB SOURCES WOULD BE INCREASED BY 10 PERCENT BEGINNING JANUARY 1974, THE PANIC BUYING EASED. ALTHOUGH MOST STATIONS CONTINUE TO CLOSE BY EARLY EVENING, ALL STATIONS WILL SELL WHATEVER AMOUNT GASOLINE CUSTOMER DESIRES. THAT CONTINUES TO
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BE THE SITUATION AT THIS TIME.

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4. ON NOVEMBER 28 BRITISH GOVERNMENT BEGAN ISSUING GASOLINE RATION BOOKS AS STEP TOWARD POSSIBLE RATIONING PROGRAM IF RPT IF FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD WARRANT SUCH ACTION. RATIONING WILL NOT BEGIN UNTIL AT LEAST FEBRUARY AND CHANCES OF RATIONING SEEM TO BE DIMINISHING. EMBASSY HAS NOT YET RECEIVED RATION BOOKS FOR EITHER OFFICIAL OR PRIVATE CARS BUT WE DO EXPECT THEM WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

5. MOREOVER, FOREIGN OFFICE HAS INVITED ALL MISSIONS TO APPLY FOR SUPPLEMENTAL RATIONS OF GASOLINE TO FACILITATE THE PERFORMANCE OF OFFICIAL DUTIES. THIS EXTRA RATION MAY NOT RPT NOT INCLUDE DRIVING TO AND FROM WORK OR ANY DRIVING CONNECTED WITH SHOPPING, CHURCH, SCHOOL, RECREATION, ETC. IT MAY INCLUDE ONLY THAT DRIVING WHICH PERTAINS TO ATTENDANCE AT OFFICIAL CEREMONIES, RECEPTIONS, MEETINGS, COURIER PROGRAMS, AND DUTY OFFICER OBLIGATIONS.

6. IN SHORT, WITH EXCEPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY RATION OF GASOLINE TO EASE PRESSURE IN PERFORMING OFFICIAL DUTIES, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT AND APPARENTLY DOES NOT PLAN TO GIVE ANY SPECIAL PREFERENCE TO DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS AND CONSULAR ESTABLISHMENTS IN PURCHASING GASOLINE.

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